Agreement, signed with entrepreneur in Udaipur bypass on NH-8, no exemption is available to MPs/MLAs/MLCs and in Jaipur-Kishangarh section of NH-8, exemption is available only to local MPs and MLAs/ MLCs. In these two cases no further exemption is contemplated as these are BOT projects.

National Drivers' Licence

3152 SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a)the specific action taken to introduce a uniform system of issue of National Drivers' Licence as outlined by the Road Safety Forum;

(b)what innovative ideas have Government formulated or initiated to have an efficient and modern system of getting a drivers' licence;

(c)whether any Conference of Transport Commissioners of all States has been called to set deadlines for making issue of drivers' licnece de-centralised and easy accessibility of testing centres devoid of the corruption; and

(d)the steps taken in this regard since 1st January, 2007?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) and (b) The Road Safety Forum has suggested about uniform testing and grant of driving licences all over the country. This Ministry has already developed a standardized software to facilitate issuance of smart card based Driving Licenses and Registration Certificates and given free of cost to all State Governments/UT Administration. The Proforma for issuance of licence in Smart Card mode has already been prescribed by the Central Government and is applicable uniformly throughout the country. However, implementation of various provisions of Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and Rules framed thereunder i.e. Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 is the responsibility of the concerned State Government. The driving skill of the applicant seeking driving licence is tested either by the Licensing Authorities or the applicant has to obtain a driving certificate (for non-transport vehicles) from any institution recognised in this behalf by the State Government.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. The issuance of driving licence is already decentralized and the driving licenses are issued by concerned State Governments through

RTOs. The Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 further empowers State Governments to make rules for appointment, jurisdiction, control and functions of the Licensing Authorities. However, the State Governments can recognise certain institutions to conduct the test of competence and issue driving certificates which enables the licensing authorities to issue driving licence. Any complaint regarding corruption at the testing centres is to be looked into by the concerned State Government

System to make ports efficient

3153. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a study undertaken by Government revealed that indian ports are plagued with high dwell-time;

(b) if so, what steps are being taken to make the ports efficient;

(c) whether a comprehensive introduction of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) is contemplated to make the entire system efficient;

(d) if so, whether any ports in Andhra Pradesh would be provided with EDI;

(e) if so, the details of the time-frame fixed to complete the exercise; and

(f) if no, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Dwell-time of cargo in the ports varies depending on the nature of cargo such as bulk, break bulk or containers and the purpose, i.e. export or import. Government of India has constituted an Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Department of Shipping to make recommendations for reducing the dwell-time at Major Ports and to bring it in line with international standards. The IMG is in the process finalizing the report.

(b) Improving efficiency of the ports is an ongoing process and involves development of berths, deepening of channels, equipment upgradation and modernization of rail-road connectivity.